United Nations E/AC.51/2004/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 April 2004

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-fourth session
7 June-2 July 2004
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-first session on the in-depth evaluation of the population programme

Note by the Secretary-General**

In conformity with General Assembly resolution 48/218 B of 29 July 1994 and 54/244 of 23 December 1999, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the population programme (E/AC.51/2001/3). The report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and offices. The Secretary-General takes note of its findings and concurs with its recommendations.

* E/AC.51/2004.1.
** Submission of the present report was delayed in order to allow for the review of comments received from partners and users of services of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

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Annex

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-first session on the in-depth evaluation of the population programme

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on in-depth evaluations.

The triennial review leads to the conclusion that the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has taken adequate measures towards implementing the Committee's recommendations on the evaluation of population. As a result of actions taken since 2001, the Division has enhanced the quality of its outputs through clarification of its methods and assumptions. It has used interdisciplinary approaches to analyse the interrelationships between population and other aspects of development, such as environment and education, and in the process, has developed greater collaboration with other divisions of the Department, as well as with other offices and agencies of the United Nations system.

The Statistics Division in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is responsible for assisting countries to operate and maintain systems of civil registration and vital statistics, has taken significant steps to build national capacity in those areas. Those efforts, in turn, contribute to increasing the reliability of countries' demographic data, which is used by the Population Division in its population projections and estimates. The regional commissions, in collaboration with the Statistics Division, have also taken measures to build national capacity in methods of demographic and social statistics, including data collection.

The Population Division has taken adequate measures to increase the free dissemination of its products through its two web sites. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted: (a) the existence of a certain amount of overlap between the Division web site and the Population Information Network (POPIN) web site; and (b) a decrease in the networking capacity of POPIN, owing to the phasing out of the post of coordinator and the inactivity of the POPIN Advisory Committee. While the Division has ensured that the two web sites are complementary and that there is no duplication of tasks and staffing related to their maintenance, in the future it should consider the need for networking by the users of demographic data and work more closely with the Department of Public Information to facilitate the sales of its publications.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services found that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), which during the past 10 years have consolidated their population activities into broader social development programmes, have taken measures to assist countries in

integrating the population dimension in their development plans and policies through the dissemination of computer simulation models, publications and training workshops. There have been increasing exchanges between the regional commissions and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on work methods and procedures, and joint participation in conferences and working groups on emerging issues. Negative effects of the consolidation have been a decline in staffing resources dedicated to population work and a reduced capacity to conduct demographic research and basic data collection. Several regional commissions were successful in obtaining contributions from Governments and research institutions in support of convening population conferences and conducting research. However, ECA, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), ESCAP and ESCWA have not been able to offset the gap caused by the reduction in regular budget resources and/or extrabudgetary funds contributed by the United Nations Population Fund.

There has been clear progress in implementing many of the Committee's recommendations. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that the complex and dynamic interactions between population, poverty and the environment at the global, regional and national levels should continue to be an important focus of the subprogramme. While there is increasing awareness of the importance of the population dimension in the formulation of social policies at the national level, due to the shifting priorities of funds and programmes and a decline in regular budget resources in the regional commissions, there has been less emphasis placed on basic demographic research, particularly at the regional level. As empirically grounded research and data on demographic trends is extremely valuable in guiding the development of national population policies, it is important for Member States, multilateral organizations and the private sector to provide financial support to the population research agenda to offset the decline in resources noted above.

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I. Introduction

1. At its forty-first session, in 2001, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of population (E/AC.51/2001/3) and endorsed all 11 recommendations contained in the evaluation report. In addition, the Committee recommended that the Population Division improve its work in six areas covered by 6 additional recommendations of the Committee, which it identified as recommendations (a) through (f).[1] Thus, the Committee adopted a total of 17 recommendations. The present report contains the findings of the triennial review conducted to determine the extent to which the Committee's recommendations made three years ago have been implemented.

2. The population programme is implemented by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which provides substantive support to the Commission on Population and Development, monitoring of population trends and policies, analysis and projections of demographic data and dissemination. The programme is also implemented at the regional level by the regional commissions.

3. The present triennial review is based on: (a) the information provided by the Division and the regional commissions on progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a process which is monitored twice a year by the Office of Internal Oversight Services; (b) a review undertaken in early 2004 of the relevant documents obtained from the Division and the regional commissions; and (c) a survey done in late 2003 of different United Nations agencies and institutions concerned with population issues.

II. Findings

4. Considering that the additional recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (see para. 1 above) touched upon several issues addressed in the evaluation report, in the sections below, recommendations have been grouped by programme topics to facilitate the review of their implementation by the Committee and to avoid repetition, as shown in the table below.

Grouping of recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination by programme topics

Programme topic	*Review of implementation of recommendations*	*Review of implementation of additional recommendations of the Committee*
A. Strengthening data collection, analysis and coverage of information by the central programme	1. Improving the coverage of information on population activities presented to the Commission on Population and Development	(a) Use of reliable country data
	2. Enhancing the quality and usefulness of the Division's output	(b) Helping countries to strengthen systems of routine data collection
	5. Funding	(c) Inclusion of a poverty focus within some of the Population Division's analysis
	6. Interdisciplinary approaches to population issues	(d) Inclusion of the important dimension of the environment in the Division's research
	9. Gender mainstreaming	
B. Dissemination of information	4. Future of the Population Information Network	(e) Coordination of efforts in maintaining the two web sites (POPIN and the Population Division web site) to reduce any duplication
	3. Print publications on population	(f) Dissemination of information through the Internet to ensure that no information is available solely through sales publications
C. Activities of the regional commissions	7. Assessment of restructuring in the regional commissions	
	8. More active exchange of experience	
	10. Extrabudgetary funding for population activities of the regional commissions	
D. Intergovernmental review	11. Review of the evaluation report and related Committee for Programme and Coordination recommendations by the Commission on Population and Development	

A. Strengthening data collection, analysis and coverage of information by the central programme

Recommendation 1
Improving the coverage of information on population activities presented to the Commission on Population and Development

The Commission on Population and Development may consider the need for an overview report and decide on its nature, scope and periodicity, as well as on arrangements for the preparation of such a report based on a proposal to be prepared by the Population Division, after consultation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the regional commissions, specialized agencies and funds, the International Organization for Migration and non-governmental organizations.

5. The Division did not prepare a proposal for a comprehensive report because it believed that the issue had been settled in 1995 when the Commission had decided to have only oral reports in lieu of a written report. Nonetheless, the Commission's Bureau was informed of the above Office of Internal Oversight Services recommendation at its intersessional meeting of November 2001 and again at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development in 2002. The Commission will review its needs for documentation at its thirty-seventh session under agenda item 4, entitled "Review of the methods work of the Commission on Population and Development".

6. The Division did not prepare a proposal as recommended, based on a valid rationale. Nonetheless, the Commission will have the opportunity to re-examine its need for documentation at its thirty-seventh session, during the last week of March 2004.

Recommendation 2
Enhancing the quality and usefulness of the Division's output

In future publications, the Population Division should provide clear statements on the methodology and assumptions underlying its estimates and projections, and provide more interpretation of results, including identification of emerging issues in a less technical, more user-friendly format.

7. In the light of the recommendation, the Division has adopted the practice of issuing executive summaries, including results of its studies and highlights of its publications in a less technical and more user-friendly format. All the documents and publications reviewed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services contained a section on methodology. *World Population Prospects, The 2002 Revision*, published in 2003, included a section clarifying changes and adjustments made to procedures followed in the 2000 revision. A study entitled "The impact of AIDS", published in 2003, devoted an entire chapter to various methodologies used in studying the impact of AIDS and identified areas where future research was needed. The *International Migration Report, 2002*[2] devotes a chapter to definitions, sources of data and methodologies, and the *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*, contains a chapter on procedures to estimate and project the population of urban areas and urban agglomeration, which clarifies methods used for the projections. In 2002, the Division also published a report on methods for estimating adult mortality.

8. Most of the major users of the Division's outputs who responded to the Office of Internal Oversight Services survey stated that the Division had clarified both the assumptions underlying the 2002 revisions of the *World Population Prospects* and the methodology of its other publications. However, some respondents indicated that more clarification was needed as to why fertility rates for specific countries had been changed in relation to the 2000 revision. Some of the Division's projections consider the increased mortality risks to which some populations will be subjected, particularly because of HIV/AIDS. While recognizing the magnitude of the task involved in including in the projections different mortality variants for every country, a respondent suggested that it would be useful for the Division to provide illustrative calculations showing the impact of alternative future mortality trends caused by factors others than HIV/AIDS.

9. The Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that recommendation 2 was implemented in a satisfactory manner.

Recommendation 5
Funding

The Population Division should submit research proposals for consideration to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), foundations and other donors in the areas of fertility and reproductive health, ageing, international migration and population and development.

10. The Division has submitted research proposals to donor organizations for funding. In 2001, the Division received support from the MacArthur Foundation on fertility transition and from the United States of America's National Institute on Aging for a research project.

11. While the Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that the Division has taken steps to implement recommendation 5, it should continue its efforts in this area.

Recommendation 6
Interdisciplinary approaches to population issues

In order to improve further the quality of estimates and projections, to enhance understanding of the interrelationships between population and development and to promote substantive linkages among the various sections, the Population Division should develop task forces or joint projects and encourage interdisciplinary approaches to foster collaboration between the Division and other units within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other programmes and agencies, including collaboration on technical assistance.

12. Regarding the need for the Division to adopt more interdisciplinary approaches and form joint task forces, the Office of Internal Oversight Services observed that interdisciplinary approaches have been used, particularly in the work of the Division related to monitoring population trends and policies. These interdisciplinary approaches have been used to explore, for example, the relationships between population and the environment and between population and reproductive rights, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. In these studies, as well as in others involving ageing and migration, the Division has collaborated with other divisions in the

Department, as well as with other offices and agencies of the United Nations system. More recently, in 2003, the Division collaborated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Institute of Statistics on the interrelationships between population, education and development, which resulted in a United Nations publication in 2003.[3] In 2003, the Division also organized the second Coordination Meeting on International Migration which considered all aspects on international migration, in particular economic issues such as remittances, social issues, such as human trafficking, and political issues, such as security. One of the major objectives of the meeting was the continued collaboration among all offices in the United Nations system active in the area of international migration, as well as intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. The General Assembly has recognized the value of this activity, as evidenced by its recent resolution 58/208 of 23 December 2003, in which the Assembly encouraged the Division to continue convening such meetings on international migration.

13. Of the regional commissions that commented on their collaboration with the Division, two expressed satisfaction with it, while one expressed the view that, during the past two years, collaboration had been limited and stated the need for greater cooperation to analyse the interlinkages between population and poverty at the regional level.

14. The Office of Internal Oversight Services is of the view that, overall, the Division has implemented recommendation 6. It is anticipated that collaboration with the regional commissions will be further strengthened.

Recommendation 9
Gender mainstreaming

Resources permitting, the urban projections of the Population Division should be disaggregated by sex and age.

15. The Division has stated that it would be willing to implement the recommendation if resources were available. So far this has not occurred. There is no evidence that the Division took the required action by making changes through the budgetary process.

Additional recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Recommendation (a)

The Population Division should improve its work in the use of reliable country data.

16. The Division has always tried to use the most reliable country data available, both when undertaking its biennial revisions of world population estimates and projections and in its other studies. The Division cooperates with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, regional commissions and other international and regional bodies to ensure that it has access to the latest reliable data available. New actions taken during the report period are discussed in paragraphs 18 to 21 below.

17. The Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that the Division has implemented the Committee's additional recommendation (a).

Recommendation (b)

The Population Division should improve its work in helping countries to strengthen systems of routine data collection.

18. This task is the responsibility of the Demographic Statistics Section of the United Nations Statistics Division and the statistics units in the various regional commissions.

19. At its twenty-sixth session, in 1991, the Statistical Commission adopted the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems. The programme's objective was to assist countries that lack or have an incomplete civil registration system in developing in a coordinated manner the capability to operate and maintain the fundamental systems of civil registration and vital statistics. Accordingly, the Statistics Division has provided technical guidance to countries and encouraged them to undertake self-sustaining programmes to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems, with emphasis on national efforts and genuine commitment to long-term reform. Technical guidance was provided through publications, training and the convening of expert group meetings.

20. Some of the regional commissions have also been active in assisting countries in strengthening their routine systems of data collection. In collaboration with the Department's Statistics Division and UNFPA, ESCAP has provided advisory services to countries to build national capacity in improving population data collection. In addition, the Statistical Institute of Asia and the Pacific in Tokyo, a regional institute subsidiary of ESCAP, conducts regular training programmes which include concepts and methods related to demographic and social statistics. Future ESCAP activities will include the provision of assistance to national statistical offices in the region on the measurement of disability.

21. The ESCWA team on social statistics and indicators, in collaboration with the Department's Statistics Division, has provided assistance to strengthen national statistical capacity and develop common methodologies for this purpose in the ESCWA region. A series of workshops were organized in 2002 and 2003 on the topics of management and harmonization of census methodologies, including concepts and definitions, as well as processing data using modern techniques. Emphasis has been placed on the importance of collecting accurate, timely and reliable data to serve as a basis for socio-economic policies.

22. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that additional Committee recommendation (b) was adequately implemented by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and by some regional commissions.

Recommendation (c)

The Population Division should improve its work on inclusion of a poverty focus within some of its analysis.

23. The Division has included indicators of poverty in its 2002 and its forthcoming 2004 databank on population resources, environment and development, and has included poverty aspects when relevant in its other substantive studies.

24. While most of respondents to the Office of Internal Oversight Services survey stated that the Division had included an appropriate focus on poverty in its analysis, several respondents were either not aware of it or expressed the need for more analysis of the complex interactions between population dynamics and poverty, particularly at the regional level.

25. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that the Division has made an effort to implement the Committee's additional recommendation (c) but that it should conduct more analysis of the complex interactions between population dynamics and poverty, possibly in collaboration with the regional commissions.

Recommendation (d)

The Population Division should improve its work on the inclusion of the important dimension of the environment in its research.

26. Most of the respondents to the Office of Internal Oversight Services survey agreed that there had been improvement in this area.

27. The Population Division issued the following materials during 2001 on population, environment and development: *Population, Environment and Development: The Concise Report*;[4] *World Population Monitoring: Population, Environment and Development*;[5] and a wall chart on population, environment and development. In 2002, it issued the databank on population, resources, environment and development.

28. The Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that the Division has made a satisfactory effort to implement Committee additional recommendation (d).

B. Dissemination of information

Recommendation 3
Print publications on population

United Nations print publications on population should consist of:

(a) Publications that are issued as sales publications as a matter of record or for other non-commercial reasons, for which print runs should continue to be small. The same information can be issued additionally in mimeograph or similar inexpensive print or machine-readable forms and distributed free of charge. The information contained in these print publications should also be disseminated through the Population Information Network (POPIN) and posted on the Division's web site;

(b) Publications that are of potential commercial significance, which should be financed, produced, advertised and sold, so as to maximize sales revenues, with online information made available in a manner that protects the United Nations commercial interest in those publications. Advertising, book launches and other publicity events should be organized for these publications;

(c) Not-for-sale publications, which should be distributed free in an inexpensive print form and posted on the POPIN and Division web sites.

Related additional recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Recommendation (f)

The Population Division should improve its work on dissemination of information through the Internet to ensure that no information is available solely through sales publications.

29. The Division collaborated closely with the Sales and Marketing Section of the Department of Public Information in promoting and marketing its publications through press releases, print advertisements, special mailings and promotion, through attendance at professional conferences and book fairs and through the Department of Public Information web site. The Department's marketing efforts in this area have increased, as evidenced by the yearly mailing of a specialized brochure containing information on recent United Nations publications on population and demography. However, despite these efforts, there has been a slight decline in the average sales of Population Division publications over the past three years (from 390 copies in 2001 to 320 in 2003). This decline could be attributed to the Division's practice of posting on its web site the full text of many of its sales publications including major titles with significant commercial potential (see para. 30 below). The Office of Internal Oversight Services also noted that the Division sells some of its publications listed on its web site directly, without linking to the Department of Public Information web site for the processing of orders.

30. The Division stated that, in response to recommendation 3, as well as to delays in the editing and printing process of its publications, it had adopted the practice of posting its publications in their entirety, or their executive summary on the Population Division web site. The Division's analysis of the server logs that track the traffic to the POPIN web site indicate that there were approximately 500,000 pages visits in 2002.

31. It should be noted that one of the Division's expected accomplishments in its budget for the biennium 2002-2003 had been improved and timely access by Governments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to the United Nations research findings in the field of population and development, including via the Internet, as measured by indicators such as the frequency of use of research findings in the field of population and development, as evidenced by references made by Member States and civil societies on the issues of population and development.

32. Based on the above, the Office of Internal Oversight Services concludes that recommendations 3 (a), 3 (c) and Committee additional recommendation (f) have been satisfactorily implemented. Recommendation 3 (b) was partially implemented. While recognizing the Division's concerns to make its new publications available on the Internet to maximize their impact and overcome delays in printing, the Office of Internal Oversight Services believes that the Division should work more closely with the Department of Public Information to facilitate the sales of its publications through linking to that Department's web site for the processing of orders.

Recommendation 4
Future of the Population Information Network

(a) Given the value of POPIN and the Global POPIN Coordinating Unit, the Population Division should, in collaboration with UNFPA, energetically seek both regular and extrabudgetary funds to ensure the continuation of existing POPIN activities;

(b) Decisions affecting the future status, scope and direction of the POPIN work programme and its relation to the work programme of the Division should be addressed to the POPIN Advisory/Coordinating Committee, which includes representation from the primary donor and the regional commissions;

(c) Population information generated in ESCWA should be posted on its POPIN web site as soon as possible.

Related additional recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Recommendation (e)

The Population Division should improve its work on coordination of efforts in maintaining the two web sites (POPIN and the Division web site) to reduce any duplication.

33. Since the 2001 evaluation,[5] the Division has made a number of changes to POPIN. In the course of 2001, with funding provided by UNFPA, the POPIN web site was redesigned to make it easier for users to navigate it and a search engine was introduced to aid users in finding relevant links and files within the POPIN system. However, in 2002, UNFPA support for this activity ceased and, in the absence of an alternative source of funding, the post of network coordinator was phased out. The Division stated that, owing to the lack of a Professional post for undertaking population information technology activities, future development and updating of POPIN would be limited. While a majority of respondents to the survey found the POPIN web site useful, a minority found that its usefulness as a network had declined. The reason given was that, owing to the loss of the coordinator post, the network had been redefined as a web site and that the valued added of having a coordinator and continuous interaction between the centre and the nodes was now lacking.

34. In relation to the need for the future of POPIN to be discussed in the POPIN Advisory/Coordinating Committee (recommendation 4 (b)), since the POPIN Advisory Committee, which used to serve as a hub for networking by POPIN users and contributors of information, no longer meets, the need for networking by the users of demographic information must be an important consideration in the future.

35. As regards the Committee's additional recommendation (e), that there should be coordination between the Division web site and POPIN to reduce any duplication, the Office of Internal Oversight Services notes that coordination exists since the Division manages both web sites. While the Division web site provides information related to recently issued Population Division research publications and contains documents of the Commission on Population and Development, POPIN is organized to provide links to other United Nations departments, the regional commissions, funds and programmes and specialized agencies involved in

population issues. While the Office of Internal Oversight Services noted the existence of a certain overlap between the two web sites, the Division has worked to ensure their complementarity and there is no duplication of tasks and staffing related to their maintenance.

36. With regard to recommendation 4 (c) that information generated by ESCWA should be posted on its POPIN web site, the Office of Internal Oversight Services review of the ESCWA web site confirmed that the recommendation has been adequately implemented.

37. The Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that recommendation 4 (c) and the Committee's additional recommendation (e) were implemented in an adequate manner, while recommendation 4 (a) was partially implemented. Concerning recommendation 4 (b), since the POPIN Advisory Committee no longer meets, in the future, the Division should consider the need for networking by the users of demographic information.

C. Activities of the regional commissions

Recommendation 7
Assessment of restructuring in the regional commissions

The triennial review of the population programme should include an assessment of the restructuring of population activities in the regional commissions.

38. The Office of Internal Oversight Services reviewed the result of the restructuring of population activities in the regional commissions that had occurred within the past 10 years. This included the population activities in ESCAP (2003), ESCWA (2002) and ECA (1998).

39. As a result of a restructuring that took place in 2003, following a review by ESCAP of its programme of work, population issues have been consolidated in the subprogramme on social development, including emerging social issues, which is implemented by the Population and Social Integration Section. One of the expected accomplishments was to increase attention to emerging social issues so that they could be mainstreamed into Governments' planning and policies. The Section's activities have focused on the theme population, disability and ageing. Activities have continued to include advocacy, monitoring of demographic trends, dissemination of population information and technical assistance. As a result of the restructuring, the Section lost one of the two Professional posts that had been dedicated to population work. The other four posts handle a range of issues related, inter alia, to demographic trends, and population and social integration. In addition, in 2004, UNFPA is funding two Local level and three General Service posts. While it is too early to assess the impact of the recent restructuring on the population activities in ESCAP, it appears that the loss of one post previously dedicated to population issues will have an immediate impact on the level of advisory services provided and on population information activities.

40. In 2002, in line with the restructuring of ESCWA, the Population Section was transformed into the Population and Development Team, with a stronger focus on the interrelationships between population and development, and population policies within the framework of the International Conference on Population and

Development (ICPD) and the five-year review of the implementation of its Programme of Action.[6] The Office of Internal Oversight Services found the following evidence of such integration during the period covered by the present report: a workshop was held on methods and applications on integrating population policy issues, including reproductive health into development planning, and the first issue of a recurrent publication, the ESCWA *Population and Development Report*. The first issue of this publication addressed the severity of water shortages in the region, its impact on people's lives and challenges faced by Arab countries in meeting the demand of their growing populations. At the same time, the Office of Internal Oversight Services observed that the consolidation of population activities into the integrated social policy subprogramme had had a negative effect on the regular budget staff level of the Population and Development Team staff, which declined from three staff members to one, and had negatively affected the capacity of the unit to make a significant contribution in the area of population research. UNFPA has expressed concern that the reduction of regular budget staffing capacity could affect the ability of ESCWA to attract UNFPA funds in the future and has raised this issue with the ESCWA senior management. The ESCWA senior management has addressed that concern by allocating two additional Professional posts to strengthen population-related activities as part of the integrated social policy subprogramme.

41. With the restructuring exercise carried out in ECA in 1996, the Population Division was abolished and population activities were integrated into the new Sustainable Development Division. A major example of the integration of the population activities of ECA into the other development issues is illustrated by the efforts of the Sustainable Development Division, through training and advocacy, to increase the use by countries in the region of the population-environment-development-agriculture simulation model, which demonstrates the medium to long-term impact of alternative national policies on the food security status of the population. Training workshops were organized by the Sustainable Development Division to enhance the capacity of member States to formulate and implement policies and programmes in the interlinked areas of food security. Participants from 10 African countries attended the workshops. An ECA survey of 10 countries in 2003 revealed that the training workshops had contributed to raising awareness of the nexus issues and that actual policies in eight of those countries appeared to be influenced by the population-environment-development-agriculture model. The Office of Internal Oversight Services also observed that the Division's proposed budget for the biennium 2004-2005 showed that there had been a shift of focus towards the 10-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development and an increase in extrabudgetary resources allocated to it, primarily through bilateral contributions. The Office of Internal Oversight Services noted that the above-mentioned expected accomplishments were achieved despite a high rate of staff turnover, due to mobility of Sustainable Development Division staff to other duty stations.

42. The Office of Internal Oversight Services assessment of the implementation of restructuring in the above-mentioned regional commissions is that there has been both a positive and negative impact. One positive finding was that regional commissions had provided assistance to Member States in integrating population factors in their development planning. In one instance (ECA), there was evidence that this assistance has increased Governments' awareness of the interdependence

between population and the other aspects of development. Another positive finding was that there is now a stronger focus on action programmes that grew out of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.[7] On the negative side, there has been a decrease in the attention placed on data collection and analysis. This shift of emphasis is due in great part to the change in priorities of the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes (see para. 48 below), and Governments' preference for funding activities that attract high visibility, such as regional population conferences, usually hosted by the Government donating the funds, over basic population research. Another reason for the decline in research and analysis of population and demography trends has been the decrease in the level of regular budget staffing resources following the restructuring.

43. This decline in basic data collection, research and analysis in population was noted with concern at the 2004 European Population Forum, which was organized jointly by ECE and UNFPA. In the summary of deliberations, the Chairperson stated that the development, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable population policies needed a solid knowledge base, including interdisciplinary research and routine statistics, and that there was a need for Governments, intergovernmental organizations and institutions in the region to provide financial support to advance the population research agenda.

Recommendation 8
More active exchange of experience

There should be more active exchange of experience among staff in the regional commissions dealing with population issues. While some information is available on the respective regional commission web sites, demonstrations of the various products (such as retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer software (REDATAM) from ECLAC, the population-environment-development-agriculture simulation model in ECA and indicators of achievements of the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development) could be scheduled to coincide with the annual session of the Commission on Population and Development.

44. Several of the regional commissions reported that there had been a satisfactory exchange of experience among staff in the regional commissions and the Population Division at Headquarters. For example, there was greater participation by staff members of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre in technical meetings organized by the Population Division at Headquarters, and the Division made substantive contributions to seminars and workshops organized by CELADE. This participation resulted in exchange of methodologies in the area of population estimates and projections.

45. ECA mentioned the contribution of the Sustainable Development Division to a workshop on prospects of fertility decline held at Headquarters in 2001, and the participation and contribution of the Population Division in the fourth Meeting of the Follow-Up Committee for the Implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development (1992), which was held at ECA headquarters in 2002. The Division also presents an oral report of its activities, including the development of the population-environment-development-agriculture model at every annual session of the Commission on Population and Development.

Information on the model is also available on the Population Division-Africa web page (a web site initially launched under the name of POPIN-Africa, which has been revised extensively to be more user-friendly and to serve as a comprehensive population gateway).

46. ESCWA stated that it was currently in the final stage of completing a population policy information system which would assist in monitoring the implementation of population policies in the region against the goals and objectives set at the international conferences of the 1990s and the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Once completed, the system would be disseminated online through POPIN. ESCWA was also represented at the European Population Forum in early 2004, which was organized jointly by ECE and UNFPA. ECE and ESCAP were respectively represented at the ECE and ESCAP conferences held as follow-up events to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

47. Based on the above, the Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that recommendation 8 was adequately implemented.

Recommendation 10
Extrabudgetary funding for population activities of the regional commissions

In view of the general decline in UNFPA funding, the regional commissions should actively solicit funds for population-related research and capacity-building.

48. In accordance with UNFPA governing body's expressed priorities in support of operational activities connected with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the UNFPA regional divisions have provided support to the United Nations regional commissions in connection with the tenth anniversary of the Conference. This support has included regional reviews and analysis of the results of the Field Inquiry — a study designed to capture progress achieved by countries in implementing various commitments contained in the Programme of Action of the Conference and key actions, as well as the difficulties and constraints that those countries have faced. On the other hand, there has been a decline in support for other normative and analytical activities related to population in the regional commissions.

49. Almost all of the regional commissions stated that they had been able to secure extrabudgetary funds from a variety of sources, including Governments, foundations, and research institutes and non-governmental organizations.

50. ECLAC stated that the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre had been actively seeking to identify potential donors. Those efforts had resulted in increased extrabudgetary resources for population activities for the period 2001-2003, totalling US$ 2,115,000, half of which had come from Governments and the other half from multilateral organizations, United Nations funds and programmes and universities and foundations.

51. The regular budget resources of the Population Activities Unit in ECE were increased by one P-2 post in 2002, in order to strengthen its work on population analysis. The Unit reported having obtained in excess of $1 million from Governments and academic and research institutions for the period 2000-2003 for support of major conferences and research. In collaboration with other academic and research institutions, it had competed on several occasions for European Union

research funds, but without success. Nonetheless, the Unit anticipated that a decrease in UNFPA resources in 2004 would negatively affect its research and analytical activities. It noted that, unless it obtained additional regular or extrabudgetary resources, it would be unable to provide guidance and leadership in data collection and analysis, or promote policy dialogue among ECE member States on emerging issues.

52. ESCAP stated that, as a result of active mobilization efforts, it had secured funds from the Government of Japan to supplement UNFPA funds to organize the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in 2002, which explored the interconnections between population and poverty, reviewed progress in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and identified emerging concerns. ESCAP had also mobilized funds from the Government of the Republic of Korea to implement a technical cooperation project to improve data collection, analysis, and dissemination related to reproductive health and family planning programmes. Further resource mobilization efforts were being pursued with other bilateral donors to undertake capacity-building activities related to population ageing.

53. ESCWA has solicited extra funds from UNFPA for 2004, as well as contributions from its member countries and private sector organizations in support of activities in the field of economics and social development, including population-related research.

54. ECA obtained funds from member States and UNFPA for operational activities concerning monitoring the implementation process of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration of 1992, as well as the regional ministerial conference to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, which will be held in Dakar in June 2004.

55. The Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that, since all the regional commissions took steps to raise extrabudgetary funds, recommendation 8 was implemented.

D. Intergovernmental review

Recommendation 11
Review by the Commission on Population and Development

The present report, and the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination thereon, should be submitted to the Commission at its meeting in 2002, bearing in mind that the Commission, at its meeting in 2004, will review and appraise its work and that of the Secretariat.

56. The report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the evaluation was submitted to the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development at its intersessional meeting in 2001 and to the thirty-fifth session of the Commission in 2002. The Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that recommendation 11 was adequately implemented.

III. Conclusions

57. **The triennial review leads to the conclusion that there has been significant progress made towards implementing the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the evaluation of the population programme. Over the past three years, efforts towards strengthening the Department of Economic and Social Affairs population subprogramme and its products have shown good results. The Population Division, which implements the subprogramme, has made efforts to clarify the methodology and assumptions underlying its projections and has adopted the practice of devoting space in all of its reports and publications to discussions of technical procedures and methods followed by the Division. It has devoted greater efforts to exploring the relationships between population and other aspects of development, such as the environment and education. In order to explore these relationships, the Division, in collaboration with other divisions in the Department and other offices and agencies of the United Nations system, has developed interdisciplinary approaches. The Division has solicited and obtained additional external support for its research. The effort to improve the use of reliable country data has been led by the Department's Statistics Division, which has provided support to national efforts to operate and maintain fundamental systems of civil registration and vital statistics through publications, training and convening expert group meetings. This, in turn has contributed to increasing the reliability of demographic country data, which is used by the Population Division to prepare estimates and projections.**

58. **The Population Division has placed increasing emphasis on free dissemination of information through the Internet, by posting the executive summaries, or the entire text, of its publications on its web site. While this practice has overcome delays in printing, it may also have had a negative effect on the sales of the Division's publications. The Division should work more closely with the Department of Public Information to facilitate the sales of its publications. Improvements were made to the design and navigation of the Population Information Network (POPIN) web site. The Office of Internal Oversight Services concludes that, while still useful as a web site, the value of POPIN as a network has decreased, due to the phasing out of the post of coordinator and the inactivity of the POPIN Advisory Committee. While the Office of Internal Oversight Services observed some degree of overlap between the Division and POPIN web sites, it also noted that there is no duplication of tasks and staffing related to the maintenance of the two web sites and that the Division has worked towards achieving complementarity between them.**

59. **The Office of Internal Oversight Services reviewed the population teams and/or units in the regional commissions which had undergone restructuring since 1994 (ECA, ESCAP, ESCWA). The objective of consolidating the population activities into larger social and development subprogammes in those regional commissions was to better integrate the population dimension in Governments' development planning and social policies. The Office of Internal Oversight Services found that progress had been made towards that objective and that, in one region, through those efforts, Governments' awareness concerning the linkages between population, the environment and food security had been raised. Progress was also made in increasing the level of exchanges**

among the regional commissions and between them and the population programme on working methods and procedures of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. There were several examples of joint participation in conferences and working groups on emerging issues. With support from UNFPA, the regional commissions are continuing to focus on assisting countries in the collection of data related to implementation of the action goals agreed to at the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994. At the same time, however, there has been a decline of emphasis on basic research and data collection in the field of population in the regions. Several regional commissions were successful in obtaining contributions from Governments and research institutions for conferences and research. However, there is clearly a gap between the regional needs and the level of contributions received, particularly to support basic demographic research.

60. The Office of Internal Oversight Services considers that, given its experience and expertise, the Population Division can play a useful role in collaborating with the population units in the regional commissions on research. At a juncture when there is increasing awareness of the importance of the population dimension in analysing the issues of ageing, international migration and the impact of HIV/AIDS, it becomes increasingly important for Member States, multilateral organizations and the private sector to provide financial support to the United Nations population research agenda. The Division is well placed to raise awareness about this issue to the benefit of both the central programme and the regional population activities.

(*Signed*) Dileep **Nair**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 16* (A/56/16), para. 375.

[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. 03.XIII.4.

[3] *Population, Education and Development: The Concise Report* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 03.XIII.11).

[4] United Nations publication, Sales No. 01.XIII.15.

[5] United Nations publication, Sales No. 01.XIII.17.

[6] E/AC.51/2001/3.

[7] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.